OBSERVATIONS

ON

HAMLET.

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.

ENTERED AT STATIONER'S HALL.

Lately published,

BY THE SAME AUTHOR,

OSWAY:

A TRAGEDY.

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE.

AND

THE COVENTRY ACT:

A COMEDY

PRICE ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE.

BRITISH MUSEUM

OBSERVATIONS

ON

HAMLET;

AND ON THE MOTIVES WHICH MOST PROBABLY INDUCED

SHAKSPEARE

TO FIX UPON THE STORY OF

Amleth,

FROM THE DANISH CHRONICLE OF

SAXO GRAMMATICUS,

FOR THE PLOT OF THAT TRAGEDY:

BEING AN ATTEMPT TO PROVE THAT HE DESIGNED IT AS AN INDIRECT CENSURE ON

Mary Queen of Scots.

BY JAMES PLUMPTRE, M. A.

SEASON YOUR ADMIRATION FOR AWHILE,
TILL I MAY DELIVER THIS MARVEL TO YOU.

HAMLET.

CAMBRIDGE,

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author of theſe Obſervations is aware that haſte is in general a bad excuſe for incorrectneſs; yet he hopes ſome allowances will be made him on that account in the preſent publication. Having inadvertently mentioned what he deemed a diſcovery before he had inveſtigated the ſubject, or intended publiſhing his Obſervations on it, a fear of being anticipated has induced him to hurry the work through the preſs as faſt as poſſible. Some improvements might be made in the arrangement of the arguments; but many of them have been added while the work was going through the preſs, and after the parts to which they more properly belonged were printed off.

CLARE HALL,
FEB. 22, 1796.

E R R A T A.

Page 3, Note 3, Line 21, for *couclude* read *conclude*.
—— 6, Note 6, for *Jutoram* read *Jutorum*.
—— 23, Line 9, for *come* read *came*.
—— 29, Note, for *alluſſion* read *alluſion*.
—— 30, Line 15, for *improbabilities* read *inconſiſtencies*.

OBSERVATIONS

ON

HAMLET, &c.

WHEN we conſider the immenſe bulk to which the later editions of the works of our immortal Dramatiſt are ſwelled, it naturally leads us to imagine that Induſtry muſt have exhauſted all her patience, and Ingenuity her conjectures, in attempting to elucidate his unrivalled compoſitions. Yet the contrary appears to be the real ſtate of the caſe, and the preſs ſtill teems with new Shakſpeares and freſh Shakſpeariana. This "vaſt garden of criticiſm" ſtill puts forth its flowers and its weeds, and invites the attention of the labourer and the floriſt. A ſolitary wanderer, in caſually paſſing through this delightful ſpot, has accidentally diſcovered a flower, which appears to have hitherto eſcaped the notice of its more ſtudious admirers.

When the Author of theſe Obſervations was reading lately, in Mr. Tytler's "Inquiry into the Evidence againſt Mary Queen of Scots[1]," the account of the various artifices uſed by Queen Elizabeth to blacken the fame of that unfortunate Princeſs; it occurred to him, from the ſimilarity of the ſtories, that Shakſpeare had perhaps written his Tragedy of Hamlet to flatter the prejudices of his miſtreſs, and exhibit to the world an indirect crimination of her injured rival; what, at that time, appeared to him to be a probable conjecture, an inveſtigation of the ſubject has ripened into conviction.

Lord Orford has ſhewn[2], with equal ingenuity and probability, that our incomparable Bard wrote his Winter's Tale as an indirect apology for Anne Boleyn, the mother of Elizabeth. He who could write an allegorical apology, would well know how to write an allegorical cenſure.

In the Midſummer Night's Dream, written in 1592, he has paid a compliment to Elizabeth at the expence of Mary[3]. It is certain then that he had no

1 A book which for depth of reſearch, ſoundneſs of reaſoning, and humanity and candour of ſentiment, ſhews the author to be at once the gentleman, and the ſcholar.

2 Hiſtoric Doubts, p. 114.

3 Thou remember'ſt
Since once I ſat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid, on a dolphin's back,
Uttering ſuch dulcet and harmonious breath,

That

no ſcruples of delicacy towards her, even after her death *. And he, who could write thus in 1592, would

That the rude ſea grew civil at the ſong;
And certain ſtars ſhot madly from their ſpheres,
To hear the ſea-maid's muſick.
That very time I ſaw, (but thou could'ſt not)
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took
At a fair veſtal, throned by the weſt;
And loos'd his love-ſhaft ſmartly from his bow,
As it ſhould pierce an hundred thouſand hearts:
But I might ſee young Cupid's fiery ſhaft
Quench'd in the chaſte beams of the watery moon;
And the imperial votreſs paſſed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.

"The firſt thing obſervable on theſe words (ſays Dr. Warburton) is, that this action of the *mermaid* is laid in the ſame time and place with Cupid's attack upon the *veſtal*. By the *veſtal* every one knows is meant Queen Elizabeth. It is very natural and reaſonable then to think that the *mermaid* ſtands for ſome eminent perſonage of her time. And, if ſo, the allegorical covering, in which there is a mixture of ſatire and panegyric, will lead us to couclude, that this perſon was one of whom it had been inconvenient for the author to ſpeak openly, either in praiſe or diſpraiſe. All this agrees with Mary Queen of Scots, and with no other. Queen Elizabeth could not bear to hear her commended; and her ſucceſſor would not forgive her ſatyriſt. But the Poet has ſo well marked out every diſtinguiſhed circumſtance of her life and character in this beautiful allegory, as will leave no room to doubt about his ſecond meaning. She is called a *mermaid*, 1. to denote her reign over a kingdom ſituate in the ſea, and 2. her beauty, and intemperate luſt:

" ——————*Ut turpiter atrum*
" *Deſinat in piſcem mulier formoſa ſuperne.*"

for as Elizabeth, for her chaſtity, is called a *veſtal*, this unfortunate lady, on a contrary account, is called a *mermaid*. 3. An ancient ſtory may be ſuppoſed to be here alluded to. The emperor Julian

would not heſitate four years after (1596, the year Hamlet tells us, Epiſtle 41. that the Sirens (which, with all the modern poets, are *mermaids*) contended for precedency with the Muſes, who overcoming them took away their wings. The quarrels between Mary and Elizabeth had the ſame cauſe and the ſame iſſue,

——————*on a dolphin's back,*] This evidently marks out that diſtinguiſhing circumſtance of Mary's fortune, her marriage with the Dauphin (formerly ſpelt Dolphin) of France, ſon of Henry II.

Uttering ſuch dulcet and harmonious breath,] This alludes to her great abilities of genius and learning, which rendered her the moſt accompliſhed princeſs of her age. The French writers tell us, that, while ſhe was in that court, ſhe pronounced a Latin oration in the great hall of the Louvre, with ſo much grace and eloquence, as filled the whole court with admiration.

That the rude ſea grew civil at her ſong;] By the *rude ſea* is meant Scotland encircled with the ocean; which roſe up in arms againſt the regent, while ſhe was in France. But her return home preſently quieted theſe diſorders: and had not her ſtrange ill conduct afterwards more violently inflamed them, ſhe might have paſſed her whole live in peace. There is the greater juſtneſs and beauty in this image, as the vulgar opinion is, that the mermaid always ſings in ſtorms:

And certain ſtars ſhot madly from their ſpheres
To hear the ſea-maid's muſick.] Thus concludes the deſcription, with that remarkable circumſtance of this unhappy lady's fate, the deſtruction ſhe brought upon ſeveral of the Engliſh nobility, whom ſhe drew in to ſupport her cauſe. This, in the boldeſt expreſſion of the ſublime, the poet images by *certain ſtars ſhooting madly from their ſpheres:* By which he meant the Earls of Northumberland and Weſtmorland, who fell in her quarrel; and principally the great Duke of Norfolk, whoſe projected marriage with her was attended with ſuch fatal conſequences. Here again the reader may obſerve a peculiar juſtneſs in the imagery. The vulgar opinion being that the mermaid allured men to deſtruction by her ſongs. To which opinion Shakſpeare alludes in his *Comedy* of *Errors*.

Hamlet was written [5]) ſtill farther to flatter his miſtreſs by adding his drop to the flood of calumny poured out againſt her rival.

Shakſpeare had a ſtory at hand, moſt admirably adapted for this purpoſe, in the Daniſh Chronicle of Saxo Grammaticus: a ſtory which was, in many reſpects, ſo exactly the counterpart of the calumnies circulated againſt Mary, that it ſeemed, as Mr. Malone obſerves of that of Doraſtus and Fawnia, which furniſhed the plot for the Winter's Tale, almoſt to force the ſubject upon him; and, where he has made alterations, they appear to be for the purpoſe of adapting the ſtory ſtill farther to his deſign. The ſtory indeed is ſo extremely pointed, that, unleſs Shakſpeare wiſhed to apply it to Mary, its ſimilarity would have been a ſufficient reaſon for rejecting it.

It

" *O train me not, ſweet* mermaid, with thy note,
" *To* drown me *in thy ſiſter's flood of tears.*"

On the whole, it is the nobleſt and juſteſt allegory that was ever written. The laying it in *fairy land*, and out of nature, is in the character of the ſpeaker. And on theſe occaſions Shakſpeare always excels himſelf. He is born away by the magic of his enthuſiaſm, and hurries his reader along with him into theſe ancient regions of poetry, by that power of verſe, which we may well fancy to be like what:

——— *olim Fauni Vateſque canebant.*"

This very able note is given at full length, as its own merit and its happy illuſtration of our author's mode of allegorizing will throw a farther light on theſe pages.

4 She was beheaded Feb. 8. 1587.

5 Vide " Malone's Attempt." Vol. I. p. 304.

It will be adviſeable to take a view of the reſpective ſtories, and then to conſider them as tending to eſtabliſh or overthrow this hypotheſis.

A brief abſtract of the ſtory of AMLETH, taken from the 3d and 4th books of the Daniſh Chronicle of *Saxo Grammaticus*.

In the reign of Roderic, King of Denmark, Horwendillus and Fengo, ſons of Gerwendillus, had the garriſon of Jutland committed to their care [6]. Horwendillus, who was the braveſt pirate on the ſeas, was envied by Coller, King of Norway, for the glory of his actions. Coller ſailed in purſuit of him, engaged him, and was ſlain; Horwendillus put to death the King of Norway's ſiſter, Sela; and, having given proofs of his valour for three years, he preſents his ſpoils to Roderic to ſecure his friendſhip. After living ſome time in intimacy with him, he obtains the King's daughter Geruth in marriage, and had a ſon, named Amleth, by her.

Fengo, fired with envy at his brother's happineſs, reſolves to ruin him by treachery. An opportunity offers, and he embrues his hands in his blood [7]. He wins

6 Eodem tempore Horwendillus et Fengo, quorum pater Gerwendillus Jutoram præfectus extiterat, eidem a Roderico in Jutiæ præſidium ſurrogantur. At Horwendillus triennio tyrannide geſta, &c.

7 At ubi datus parricidio locus, cruenta manu funeſtam mentis libidinem ſatiavit.

wins over his brother's wife by diſſembling the motives of his villainy, and adds inceſt to the horrid crime of fratricide.

Amleth feigns madneſs, that he may not awaken ſuſpicions in his uncle's breaſt by an over-prudent care for his ſafety, and covers his real deſigns by that artifice.

Amleth's madneſs being ſuſpected as feigned, various ſtratagems are tried to aſcertain the truth of it, but without ſucceſs. It is at laſt ſuggeſted to Fengo that he ſhould withdraw himſelf, under the pretence of buſineſs of importance, and Amleth be ſhut up with his mother in her apartment; firſt taking care to have ſome one concealed in a ſecret place, unknown to either of them, who ſhould over-hear all their converſation, thinking Amleth would diſcover his real ſtate to his mother.

Fengo acquieſces in the plot, and the framer of it conceals himſelf in the chamber where Amleth and his mother meet. Amleth ſuſpecting the deſign, diſcovers and kills him.

Fengo at length reſolves to deſtroy Amleth, but being afraid, on account of his grandfather Roderic and his mother, he purpoſes to have him put to death by means of the King of Britain.

Amleth,

Amleth, deſiring his mother to report him dead at the end of a year, and to celebrate his obſequies in the hall, which he directs to be hung with hangings for that purpoſe; and, promiſing to return at the time, departs with two of Fengo's officers, who carry with them letters to the King of Britain, deſiring him to make away with the young man in queſtion.

Amleth diſcovers theſe letters while they are ſleeping, and ſubſtitutes others in their place, deſiring the death of the attendants, and that the King of Britain would give his daughter in marriage to Amleth.

The King complies with the purport of the letters, diſpatches the attendants, and gives his daughter in marriage to Amleth.

After a year, Amleth returns to Jutland, and enters the hall, while his obſequies are celebrating. He plies the nobles with wine, till they fall aſleep with the exceſs, when he ſecures them all by means of the hangings, which are let down upon them and faſtened, and ſetting fire to the room, deſtroys them all, except Fengo, who had retired to his apartment; he follows him, and there ſtabs him with a ſword.

Amleth convenes the nobles, juſtifies his conduct to them, and is proclaimed King[8].

Let

8 Rex alacri cunctorum acclamatione cenſetur.

Let us now compare the leading circumſtances of this ſtory with the falſhoods circulated of Mary.

It was ſaid that ſhe had concurred in the murder of her huſband, and immediately married his murderer, the Earl of Bothwell. By her former huſband ſhe had a ſon, James the Sixth, who married the Princeſs Anne of Denmark. After James's return from this marriage, he was conſpired againſt by many of the nobles.

The plot of Shakſpeare's Play, as far as regards the principal characters, is as follows:

Hamlet, King of Denmark, was poiſoned by his brother Claudius, who uſurps his throne and marries his widow. The ghoſt of the deceaſed King appears to his ſon Hamlet, informs him that he was poiſoned in his garden by his brother, who "won to his ſhameful luſt the will of his moſt ſeeming-virtuous Queen," and was at once bereft "of life, of crown, of Queen."

Hamlet ſwears to revenge the murder; and, the better to conceal his deſigns, feigns madneſs, which the King ſuſpecting, and being offended likewiſe with a repreſentation of his wickedneſs, which Hamlet cauſes to be played before him, reſolves to ſend him to England to demand the payment of the tribute which had been neglected.

Polonius, in the mean time, adviſes that the Queen ſhall ſend for Hamlet, and queſtion him in private as to his behaviour, while he conceals himſelf to overhear the converſation. On Hamlet's behaving with ſome harſhneſs to his mother, ſhe cries out, Polonius anſwers her, and Hamlet ſtabs him while behind the arras.

Hamlet then ſets off for England, accompanied by two lords, who carry letters to the King requeſting him to put Hamlet to death on his arrival. Hamlet diſcovers theſe, and ſubſtitutes others in their place, deſiring the King of England to put the bearers to death.

Hamlet, falling into the hands of pirates, is ſet on ſhore in Denmark at his own requeſt, and returns to the King, who incites Laertes to murder him by treachery in a fencing-match. Both fall in the encounter; the Queen dies by poiſon, which the King intended for her ſon, and he himſelf is ſlain by Hamlet.

The firſt obſervation to be made on the difference of theſe ſtories is, that there is ſome obſcurity reſpecting the nature of the poſt which Horwendillus held in Jutland. It appears that he was only *præfectus* and a pirate, but we ſee immediately after the words "*tyrannide* geſta," as if it was a *kingdom*. And after the murder

murder of Fengo, Amleth "cenſetur *rex*." It appears firſt, that the garriſon of Jutland was given to the brothers by Roderic, King of Denmark, in whoſe dominions it was. It does not appear that Horwendillus ſucceeded Coller after he had ſlain him, for Fengo uſurped Horwendillus' poſt, whatever it was, and the hiſtory expreſsly ſays that Amleth returned from England to Jutland. Amleth's mother, it is true, was daughter of Roderic, but her huſband was not a King by her means, for when Fengo was murdered, Roderic was King of Denmark, and was, at his death, ſucceeded by Viglet, who uſurped the kingdom from Amleth. The mother in the Chronicle is never called *regina*, nor Fengo *rex*.

Theſe obſervations are made becauſe Shakſpeare has put it beyond a doubt, and makes his characters a King and a *Queen:* no doubt to bring the ſtory nearer to his purpoſe.

In *the Hyſtorie of Hamblett*, quoted by Mr. Malone, from which he ſuppoſes this Play to be taken, we find, "The counſellour entered ſecretly into the *Queen's* chamber." This book, whence the quotation is taken, is dated 1608, but was a *re*publication, according to Mr. Malone: the author has not had an opportunity to conſult the book, and therefore has taken his extracts from Mr. Malone's. But, as this is undoubtedly borrowed, and, in the extracts he has ſeen, nearly copied from the Chronicle, which is ſo

obſcure, it might perhaps be altered and publiſhed from the ſame motives as he ſuppoſes Shakſpeare to have been actuated by; or it might be publiſhed after the firſt appearance of the play, as being a popular tale, and while the tragedy was not yet publiſhed. We have ſeen in later times the uſe of republiſhing old ſtories, and extracts from old books, to ſerve the purpoſe of party.

He has alſo removed the Empire from Jutland to Denmark, as no doubt *Denmark* was uppermoſt in his mind; the ſon of his Queen having married a princeſs of that country.

Another obſervation is, that in the play ſcene Hamlet ſays, "Gonzago is the *Duke's* name," which is the reading of all the old copies. In the ſtage direction for the dumb-ſhew and the ſubſequent entrance it is "Enter a *King* and Queen," and that Shakſpeare meant the characters ſhould be ſo called throughout I have no doubt. For when Hamlet is informed that the players are coming, he ſays "he that plays the *King* ſhall be welcome," as it was his intention to have a play repreſented before the *King* his uncle[9], the picture of his own villainy, to "catch his conſcience." For

9 One ſcene of it comes near the circumſtance,
Which I have told thee, of my father's death.
* * * *
Obſerve my uncle: if his acculted guilt
Do not itſelf unkennel in one ſpeech,
It is a damned ghoſt that we have ſeen.

For this purpoſe, Hamlet ſuperintends the performance, and "has a ſpeech of ſome dozen or ſixteen lines inſerted in it," to make it the more applicable.

Mr. Malone makes no doubt but there was a play, of the ſame nature with this, introduced in the old play of Hamlett, which is now loſt; and that Shakſpeare took his idea from that. This conjecture is extremely probable, and alſo that the character in the main, as well as the ſecondary play of that, was perhaps a *Duke*, which Shakſpeare, for his own purpoſe, altered to a *King*, but, in the copying or tranſcribing, overlooked this place; and let the old word ſtand.

In the chronicle the mother is repreſented as *not* being acceſſary to the murder of her huſband. The Hyſtorie likewiſe appears to exculpate her[1]. Shakſpeare has

1 Vide Mr. Malone's note upon "*As kill a king*!" Vol. 9. p. 331. Where he ſeems to think, from the following paſſage, that the Queen is repreſented *as guilty*.

"The unfortunate and wicked woman that had received the honour to be the wife of one of the valianteſt and wiſeſt princes in the north, imbaſed herſelf in ſuch vile ſort as to falſifie her faith unto him, and, which is worſe, to marrie him that had bin the tyrannous murtherer of her lawful huſband; *which made diverſe men think that ſhe had bin the cauſer of the murther*, thereby to live in her adulterie without controle."

But it rather ſhould ſeem from this that the *Hiſtorian* thought her *not* guilty, as he only gives the opinion of *others*; that "diverſe men *thought* ſhe had bin the cauſer of the murther," *becauſe* "ſhe had married the murderer of her lawful huſband." And the following paſſage favours this idea, or elſe the two paſſages contradict each other:

"—much

has therefore unneceſſarily deviated from theſe, unleſs he meant to join the general accuſation againſt the injured Queen. For that he has repreſented her as acceſſary appears not to admit a doubt; and the following lines ſeem particularly levelled againſt Mary: the player Queen ſays

> In ſecond huſband let me be accurſt!
> None wed the ſecond, but who kill'd the firſt.

To which Hamlet—who had ordered the play as a trial of innocence— replies "that's *wormwood*," and aſks his mother pointedly afterwards

> "Madam how like you this play?"

by which he plainly meant to criminate her; and, in the cloſet ſcene which follows, after he has killed Polonius, and the Queen exclaims againſt it as a "bloody deed," he replies,

> A bloody deed! almoſt as bad, good mother,
> As kill a King, and marry with his brother.

Which immediately convicting her guilty conſcience, in ſurprize that her guilt is diſcovered, ſhe exclaims, "As kill a King!" When Hamlet perſeveres and anſwers "Ay, Lady, 'twas my word."

The ghoſt tells Hamlet that his brother "won to his ſhameful luſt the will of his moſt ſeeming-virtuous Queen," before his murder; and, though he deſires him

"———much leſs offer me that wrong *to ſuſpect that ever thy mother Geruth once conſented to the death and murther of her huſband:* ſwearing unto thee by the majeſty of the Gods, that if it had layne in me to have reſiſted the tyrant, although it had beene with the loſſe of my bloode, yea and of my life, I would ſurely have ſaved the life of my lord and huſband."

him not to "contrive aught againſt her, but leave her to Heaven and to thoſe thorns that in her boſom lodge to prick and ſting her," yet he never exculpates her from the murder; a plain argument, that ſhe was guilty. Nor does ſhe ever attempt to clear herſelf.

See alſo Hamlet's exclamation after the ghoſt has left him: "O moſt pernicious woman!"

Alſo, *after the play*, when Guildenſtern ſays to Hamlet that "The Queen, your mother, in *moſt great affliction of ſpirit*, hath ſent me to you." He replies, "You are welcome," as if he deſigned it to touch her.

It is alſo obſervable that the chronicle does not repreſent the mother as being depraved till after the murder of her huſband. Mary was accuſed of adultery with Bothwell before the death of Lord Darnley.

In the chronicle no direct mention is made of the means by which Fengo affected the murder of his brother. It rather appears by *cruenta manu* that he *ſtabbed* him.

Some time before the death of Lord Darnley, he was ſeized with a very dangerous and violent diſtemper, which was imagined to be the effect of *poiſon*: he however got the better of it. The manner of his death was myſterious: the houſe in which he lodged was blown up *at night* with gunpowder, and his body was found lying in an adjacent *garden*, untouched by

fire, and with no bruiſe or mark of violence about him.

How much nearer is Shakſpeare's account of the murder of the King to this circumſtance than to the chronicle:

'Tis given out, that *ſleeping* in my *orchard*,
A ſerpent ſtung me.

ſleeping within mine *orchard*,
My cuſtom always of the afternoon,
Upon my ſecure hour thy uncle ſtole,
With *juice of curſed hebenon* in a vial,
And in the porches of mine ears did pour
The leperous diſtillment.

Act. 1. Scene 4.

He *poiſons* him i'the GARDEN for his eſtate.

Act 3. S. 2.

To a Shakſpearian mind no doubt there is already ſufficient evidence whereon to reſt the hypotheſis; but, as ſome readers will perhaps require further proof, it may be uſeful, in addition to the ſketch of the Daniſh Chronicle, the calumnies circulated againſt Mary and the plot of the play, already given, to ſubjoin the ſtory of Doraſtus and Fawnia, on which the Winter's Tale is founded, and from which, (as no one refuſes to acknowledge) Shakſpeare has adapted an indirect apology for Anne Boleyn; and ſhew that the parallel in

that

that is neither ſo obvious, nor the ſtory ſo much altered for the particular purpoſe as the one in queſtion.

After that, ſome additional arguments in favour of the hypotheſis ſhall be ſubjoined.

A brief ABSTRACT *of the* STORY OF DORASTUS AND FAWNIA, *WRITTEN BY ROBERT GREENE.*

Pandoſto, King of Bohemia, married Bellaria, a princeſs of great beauty and virtue. In due time ſhe was delivered of a ſon, to whom the King gave the name of Garrinter. Pandoſto had from his youth cultivated a friendſhip with Egiſtus King of Sicily. Egiſtus, eager to ſhew his regard for Pandoſto, paid him a viſit to congratulate him upon his marriage and the birth of his ſon.

Bellaria received him with great kindneſs and attention at the requeſt of Pandoſto; who, notwithſtanding it was his own deſire, looked upon theſe marks of favour with a jealous eye, and, conceiving a violent hatred for Egiſtus, employed his cup-bearer Franion to poiſon him. Franion acquaints Egiſtus with the plot again his life, and, laying a plan for his eſcape, fled with him into Sicily.

On the flight of Egiſtus, Pandoſto accuſed Bellaria of adultery, who was ſoon after delivered of a female

child, which Pandoſto determined to murder together with her mother. His lords obtained from him a promiſe not to deſtroy the infant, and the Queen perſuaded him to conſult the Oracle at Delphos on her ſuſpected infidelity. Pandoſto cauſed the child to be expoſed in a boat at ſea, and the Oracle ſoon after declared Bellaria innocent. Garrinter, at this time, died, and the contending paſſions in Bellaria, of joy for the declaration of her innocence and grief for the death of her ſon, put a period to her life.

Bellaria's infant daughter was carried by the waves to the coaſt of Sicily, where ſhe was found by a ſhepherd, and brought up as his own, giving her the name of Fawnia. Doraſtus, ſon to Egiſtus, when Fawnia was grown up, fell in love with her, and, fearing his father's oppoſition in his wiſh to marry a ſhepherd's daughter, determined to carry her off to Italy and there marry her. The ſhip in which he ſailed was driven by a ſtorm to the coaſt of Bohemia, where, fearing the rage of Pandoſto, ſhould he diſcover his real condition, he paſſed by a feigned name. But the fame of Fawnia's beauty reaching the King's ears, he ſent for them to court, and, accuſing them of being ſpies, impriſoned Doraſtus, and ſolicited Fawnia to comply with his brutal deſires, which ſhe rejected.

Egiſtus hearing from ſome merchants that his ſon and Fawnia were in Bohemia, ſent ambaſſadors to demand him, and to deſire the death of Fawnia, an attendant who accompanied them, and Porrus, her

ſuppoſed

ſuppoſed father, whom Doraſtus had carried off with them. Pandoſto, wiſhing to conciliate the friendſhip of Egiſtus, whom he was now convinced he had injured, and fired with reſentment againſt Fawnia for rejecting his addreſſes, reſolved to comply with the requeſt Porrus, to ſave his foſter-child, diſcloſed the manner in which he found her, and diſplayed the chain and jewels ſhe wore. Pandoſto recognized his long loſt child, and with Doraſtus and Fawnia ſet ſail for Sicily, where he was welcomed by Egiſtus, who was made happy in the nuptials of his ſon with the daughter of his friend. But Pandoſto, reflecting on his paſt enormities, put an end to his life, and Doraſtus and Fawnia ſucceeded him in the throne of Bohemia.

Whoever will take the trouble to compare this ſtory with the plot of the Winter's Tale, will find that Shakſpeare has made as many or more alterations in treating it, as in the play now in queſtion; and yet, take them all together, there are not ſo many circumſtances to ſuit his allegorical meaning, as have been here pointed out. Yet ſurely there cannot be any doubt but that Shakſpeare deſigned the Winter's Tale as an indirect apology for Anne Boleyn, and ſtill leſs that he deſigned Hamlet as an indirect cenſure on Mary.

" It may not be unentertaining to obſerve, (ſays Lord Orford) that there is another of Shakſpeare's plays, that may be ranked among the hiſtoric, though

not one of his numerous critics and commentators have diſcovered the drift of it; I mean *The Winter Evening's Tale*, which was certainly intended (in compliment to Queen Elizabeth) as an indirect apology for her mother Anne Boleyn. The addreſs of the Poet appears no where to more advantage. The ſubject was too delicate to be exhibited on the ſtage without a veil; and it was too recent, and touched the Queen too nearly, for the bard to have ventured ſo home an alluſion on any other ground than compliment. The unreaſonable jealouſy of Leontes, and his violent conduct in conſequence, form a true portrait of Henry the Eighth, who generally made the law the engine of his boiſterous paſſions. Not only the general plan of the ſtory is moſt applicable, but ſeveral paſſages are ſo marked, that they touch the real hiſtory nearer than the fable. Hermione on her trial ſays,

——————for honour,
'Tis a derivative from me to mine,
And only that I ſtand for.

This ſeems to be taken from the very letter of Anne Boleyn to the King before her execution, where ſhe pleads for the infant princeſs his daughter. Mamillius, the young prince, an unneceſſary character, dies in his infancy; but it confirms the alluſion, as Queen Anne, before Elizabeth, bore a ſtill-born ſon. But the moſt ſtriking paſſage, and which had nothing to do in the Tragedy, but as it pictured Elizabeth, is, where

where Paulina, deſcribing the new-born princeſs, and her likeneſs to her father, ſays, *ſhe has the very trick of his frown.* There is one ſentence indeed ſo applicable, both to Elizabeth and her father, that I ſhould ſuſpect the poet inſerted it after her death. Paulina, ſpeaking of the child, tells the King,

> ——————— 'Tis yours;
> And, might we lay the old proverb to your charge,
> So like you, 'tis the worſe.

The Winter Evening's Tale was therefore in reality a ſecond part of Henry the Eighth."

Hiſtoric Doubts, p. 114.

" This conjecture (Mr. Malone obſerves) muſt be acknowledged to be extremely plauſible. With reſpect, however, to the death of the young prince Mamillius, which is ſuppoſed to allude to Queen Anne's having had a ſtill-born ſon, it is but fair to obſerve, that this circumſtance was not an *invention* of our poet, being founded on a ſimilar incident in Lodge's *Doraſtus and Fawnia*, in which Garanter, the Mamillius of the *Winter's Tale*, likewiſe dies in his infancy. But this by no means diminiſhes the force of the hypotheſis which has been juſt now ſtated; it only ſhews, that Shakſpeare was not under the neceſſity of twiſting the ſtory to his purpoſe, and that this, as well as the many other correſponding circumſtances between the fictitious narrative of Bellaria, (the Hermione of the preſent play) and the real hiſtory of the

mother

mother of Elizabeth, almoſt forced the ſubject upon him."

Vol. I. part I. p. 350.

In the additional arguments ſome paſſages will be brought forward to ſhew that Shakſpeare had the unfortunate Queen *directly* in mind when he wrote them; and in others, that though he did not perhaps intentionally make the kind of parallel there is; yet his *mind was ſo full of them*, that her ſtory *involuntarily* gave him ideas[2].

In this place it is ſcarce poſſible to refrain from again remarking theſe lines:

> In ſecond Huſband let me be accurſt!
> None wed the ſecond, but who kill'd the firſt.

And

> * * * *
> The inſtances, that ſecond marriage move,
> Are baſe reſpects of thrift, but none of love.
>
> Act 3. S. 2.

Which appear to be ſo ſtrongly marked, as almoſt of themſelves to eſtabliſh the hypotheſis.

The

2 Whoever has read Mr. Whiter's ingenious "Attempt to explain and illuſtrate various paſſages of Shakſpeare, on a new principle of criticiſm, derived from Mr. Locke's doctrine of *the aſſociation of ideas*"—will know in what manner to apply ſuch *involuntary combinations*.

The next point to call the reader's attention to is the ſtreſs Hamlet lays on the Queen's *haſte* to marry the murderer of her huſband, and the *time* which elapſed between the murder and her marriage.

But *two months* dead !—nay, not ſo much, not two:

O moſt wicked *ſpeed*, to *poſt*
With ſuch dexterity to inceſtuous ſheets.

Act 1. S. 2.

Ham. What is your affair in Elſineur?
Hor. My lord, I come to ſee your *father's funeral.*
Ham. I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-ſtudent;
I think it was to ſee my *mother's wedding.*
Hor. Indeed, my lord, *it follow'd hard upon.*

Act 1. S. 2.

Queen. I doubt it is no other but the main;
His father's death and our *o'erhaſty* marriage.

Act 2. S. 2

Ham. Look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within theſe *two hours.*
Oph. Nay, 'tis *twice two months*, my lord.
Ham. O Heavens! die *two months* ago, and not forgotten yet?

Act 3. S. 2.

Lord Darnley was murdered on the 10th of Feb. 1567, and Mary was married to Bothwell the 14th of May following, a ſpace of time but juſt exceeding *three months.* Shakſpeare perhaps did not know the *exact* time between the death of Lord Darnley and Mary's marriage with Bothwell; and, wiſhing to aggravate

gravate the guilt of the Queen as much as poſſible, he makes Hamlet reduce it from *two months* to *a little month.*

Hamlet's reproach to his mother for not mourning for her huſband is worthy notice.

Queen. Good Hamlet, caſt thy nighted colour off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
Do not forever with thy veiled lids
Seek for thy noble father in the duſt;
Thou know'ſt 'tis common; all that live muſt die,
Paſſing thro' nature to eternity.

Ham. Ay, madam, *it is common.*

Queen. If it be,
Why ſeems it ſo particular with thee?

Ham. *Seems*, Madam! nay, *it is*; *I* know not *ſeems.*
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother, &c.
——————*Theſe*, indeed, *ſeem:*
For they are *actions* that a man might *play:*
But *I have that within that paſſeth ſhew.*

Act 1. S. 2.

Obſerve too the following lines:

King. Therefore our ſometime ſiſter, now our Queen,
Have we—&c.
Taken to wife: nor have we herein barr'd
YOUR *better wiſdoms, which have freely gone*
With this affair along.

Act 1. S. 2.

Bothwell was *recommended* to Mary by the *Nobles* as a fit huſband for her. This is an addition of Shakſpeare's,

ſpeare's, no mention being made of it in the Chronicle.

Mary's (*pretended*, as it is called) love to Lord Darnley was notorious.

She would hang on him
As if encreaſe of appetite had grown
With what it fed on.

Act 1. S. 2.

That adulterate beaſt,
——————won to his ſhameful luſt
The will of my moſt *ſeeming-virtuous Queen.*

Act 1. S. 5.

The pictures given of the Queen's two huſbands, and the contraſt between them, is remarkable.

So excellent a King; that was, to this,
Hyperion to a SATYR.

Act 1. S. 2.

* * * *

O Hamlet, what a falling off was there!
From me, whoſe love was of that dignity,
That it went hand in hand even with the vow
I made to her in marriage; and to decline
Upon *a wretch, whoſe natural gifts were poor*
To thoſe of mine.
But virtue, as it never will be mov'd,
Tho' lewdneſs court it in the ſhape of Heaven;
So luſt, tho' to a *radiant angel* link'd,

Will ſate itſelf in a celeſtial bed,
And prey on *garbage*.

Act 1. S. 5.

* * * *

See what a grace was ſeated on this brow:
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himſelf;
An eye like Mars to threaten and command;
A ſtation like the Herald Mercury,
New lighted on a Heaven-kiſſing hill;
A combination and a form indeed,
Where every god did ſeem to ſet his ſeal,
To give the world aſſurance of a man.
——————Have you eyes
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
And batten on this moor?
A MURDERER, and a *villain:*
A *Slave*[3], that is not twentieth part the tythe
Of your precedent lord:—a *vice* of Kings;
A *Cut-purſe* of the empire and the rule;
That from the ſhelf *the precious diadem ſtole*
And put it in his POCKET[4]: A King
Of ſhreds and patches.

Act 3. S. 4.

Shakſpeare in this deſcription appears to have had the two huſbands of Mary in view rather than of the Queen in the play.

Claudius was younger than Hamlet's father, that, unleſs he was deformed, (which it it does not appear he

3 Bothwell's birth was more diſproportioned to Mary's than was Lord Darnley's: this has more force in the allegorical, than in the direct application.

4 Bothwell never *wore the crown.*

he was) having youth in his favour, the contraſt could not be ſo very great. Old Hamlet had a ſon [5] thirty years of age at this time, and other paſſages in the play lead us to ſuppoſe both the King and Queen were certainly paſt the prime of life, not to ſay old [6].

Lord Darnley was the handſomeſt young man in the kingdom, but of a weak mind: it is remarkable that no compliment is made to the deceaſed King's intellectual qualifications. Bothwell was twenty years older

5 I have been ſexton here, man and boy, *thirty years.*
I came to't the very day that young Hamlet was born.
Act 5. S. 1.

6 Player Queen to P. King—whom I conſider as the repreſentatives of Claudius and Gertrude—

But, woe is me, *you are ſo ſick of late,*
So far from cheer, and *from your former ſtate,*
That I diſtruſt you.
P. King. Faith, I muſt leave thee, love, and ſhortly too;
My operant powers their functions leave to do.
Act 3. S. 2.

Ham.—of the Queen—*At your age,*
The hey-day in the blood is tame.

* * *

O ſhame! where is thy bluſh? Rebellious hell,
If thou can'ſt mutiny in a *matron's* bones,
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,

* * *

Since *froſt itſelf* as actively doth burn,
And reaſon pander's will.
Act 3. S. 4.

older than Mary, and is repreſented by the Hiſtorians of that time as an ugly man.

Bothwell was likewiſe noted for his debauchery and drinking[7], two circumſtances which Shakſpeare ſeems never to loſe ſight of in his character of Claudius.

No jocund health, that Denmark drinks to-day,
But the great cannon to the clouds ſhall tell;
And the King's *rouſe* the Heaven ſhall bruit again,
Reſpeaking earthly thunder.

Act 1. S. 2.

* Tis an unweeded garden
That grows to ſeed; things *rank and groſs in nature*
Poſſeſs it merely:

Act 1. S. 2.

No doubt alluding to Claudius.

Ham. to Horatio. We'll teach you to *drink deep*, ere you depart.

Act 1. S. 2.

The King doth wake to-night and *takes his rouſe,*
Keeps waſſel, and the ſwaggering upſpring *reels*;

And,

7 The adventure of the Marquis of Elbeuf and Bothwell at the houſe of Aliſon Craig is well known.

Bothwell's ſupper is notoricus, where, *animis omnium ad hilaritatem ſolutis*, the bond was ſigned for taking off Lord Darnley. Vide Sir James Balfour's atteſted copy of the bond.

"Bothwell was brought up in the Biſhop of Murray's palace, a maiſt corrupt houſe in *drunkenneſs* and *whoredomes*."

BUCHANAN.

Bothwell alſo, at the time of his former marriage, lived with Lady Reres, his kept miſtreſs.

* This world.

And, as he *drains his draughts of rheniſh down*,
The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out
The triumph of his pledge.

Act 1. S. 4.

King. When Voltimand and Cornelius leave him—
Go to your reſt; at night we'll *feaſt* together.

Act 2. S. 2.

Ham. Ere this
I ſhould have fatted all the region kites
With this *ſlave's* offal. Bloody, *bawdy* villain!

Act 2. S. 2.

Guild. The King, ſir,
Is, in his retirement, marvellouſly diſtempered.
Ham. With *drink*, ſir?

Act 3. S. 2.

When he is *drunk*, &c. Act. 3. S. 3.
The *bloat* King tempt you again to bed.

Act 3. S. 3.

And let him for a pair of *reechy* kiſſes.

Act 3. S. 3.

King. Give me the *ſtoups of wine* upon that table:
——————————Give me the cups;
And let the kettle to the trumpet ſpeak,
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
The cannons to the Heavens, the Heavens to earth,
Now the King drinks to Hamlet's.

Act 5. S. 2.

Shak-

8 Perhaps the following ſpeech of Ophelia's is an alluſion to the King's intemperance:

Shakſpeare makes mention likewiſe of the Queen's *beauty*.

Oph. Where is the *beauteous* majeſty of Denmark.

Act 4. S. 5.

This is incompatible with what has been ſaid before of this Queen's *age*, but applies moſt juſtly to Mary, who was celebrated for her exquiſite beauty, and was only forty-five when ſhe was beheaded: Her ſon James was nineteen. In the beginning of the play Hamlet is repreſented as very young, one who deſigned going back to School, to the Univerſity of Wittenberg: And we have before ſeen that the Grave-digger makes Hamlet thirty: James was juſt *thirty* at the writing of this play. In ſhort, Shakſpeare ſeems to have been ſo blinded by the circumſtances he wiſhed to introduce, that he has fallen into many improbabilities between his two plans.

Shakſpeare more than once mentions the King having been taken off "in the bloſſom of his ſin," which is incompatible with the ideas we have of the King's *age* in the play, but moſt truly applicable to Lord Darnley:

Thus was I, *ſleeping*, by a brother's hand,
Of *life*, of *crown*, of *Queen*, at once diſpatch'd;
Cut off *even in the bloſſoms of my ſin*,
Unhouſell'd

Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at *your* TABLE.

Act 4. S. 5.

That is, May you have the fear of God before you, while at your table, and not give into exceſs.

Unhouſell'd, diſappointed, unanel'd;
No reckoning made, but ſent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head.

Act 1. S. 4.

He took my father groſsly, full of bread;
With all his crimes, full blown, as fluſh as May.

Act 3. S. 3.

Lord Darnley's religious principles might ſuggeſt the following lines:

Ghoſt. I am thy father's ſpirit;
Doom'd for a certain time *to walk the night*;
And, for the day, confin'd to *faſt in fires*,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are BURNT *and* PURG'D *away.*

Act 1. S. 5.

Ham. He poiſons him i'the garden for his eſtate. His name's Gonzago: the ſtory is *extant*, and *written* in very choice Italian.

Act 3. S. 2.

This may perhaps allude to the *letters* ſaid to have been written from Mary to Bothwell.

The delay of revenge in Hamlet is worſe managed in the play than in the chronicle: perhaps Shakſpeare had in mind the backwardneſs of James to revenge

revenge his father's murder. Hamlet at laſt kills Claudius not to revenge his father's, but his own cauſe. Bothwell died about the time this tragedy was written.

Yet I
A dull and muddy-mettled raſcal, peak,
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cauſe,
And can ſay nothing; no, not for a King,
Upon whoſe property, and moſt dear life,
A damn'd defeat was made.

Act 2. S. 2.

How all occaſions do inform againſt me,
And ſpur my dull revenge.

I do not know
Why yet I live to ſay, "This thing's to do;"
Sith I have cauſe, and will, and ſtrength, and means,
To do't.

How ſtand I then
That have a father kill'd, a mother ſtain'd,
Excitements of my reaſon and my blood,
And let all ſleep.

Act 4. S. 4.

Great and various were the exertions made by Elizabeth in the courſe of her reign for the augmentation of her warlike reſources. The art of making gunpowder was introduced, *brazen cannon* were caſt, and *many ſhips were built* [9].

Eliza-

9 Camden, p. 388. Strype, Vol 1. p. 230—336—337.

Elizabeth was likewiſe involved in wars and troubles, which had their origin in the death of Lord Darnley. Theſe circumſtances, no doubt, were in the Poet's mind when he wrote the following lines:

Tell me, &c.
——why ſuch daily *caſt of brazen cannon*,
And foreign mart for implements of war?
Why ſuch *impreſs of ſhip-wrights*? &c.

* * *

————————this portentous figure
Comes armed thro' our watch; ſo like *the King*
That was and is the queſtion of theſe wars.

Act 1. S. 1.

Elizabeth interfered both in the marriages of Mary and of her ſon James. She broke off the intended match between Mary and the Arch-duke Charles, that between James and the eldeſt daughter of the King of Denmark, and wiſhed to have prevented the marriage of James and the Princeſs Anne of Denmark: theſe marriages ſuited not the policy of Elizabeth, and the following lines, as ſpoken of Hamlet, would then exactly ſuit her ſentiments:

His greatneſs weigh'd, his will is not his own;
For he himſelf is ſubject to his birth:
He may not, as unvalued perſons do,
Carve for himſelf; for on his choice depends
The ſafety and the health of the whole ſtate;
And therefore muſt his choice be circumſcrib'd
Unto the voice and yielding of that body,
Whereof he is the head: Then if he ſays he loves you,

It fits your wiſdom ſo far to believe it,
As he, in his particular act and place,
May give his ſaying deed; which is no further,
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.

Nor would the following lines be unpleaſing to the ear of her, who had failed in her endeavours to prevent James's marriage, and was diſpleaſed with the court of Denmark:

——————Meet it is I ſet it down,
That one may ſmile, and ſmile, and be a villain;
At leaſt I'm ſure it may be ſo in Denmark.

The manner of Hamlet's return, and the King's practiſing on him after his return from the projected embaſſy to England, is the alteration and introduction of the Poet.

James on his return from Denmark was conſpired againſt by many of the Nobles.

Here again are traces of the ſtrong impreſſion which all the circumſtances relative to Mary, and thoſe concerned in her tragic ſtory, had made upon the mind of the poet.

Among other remarkable coincidences between the plot of Hamlet and the circumſtances attendant on Mary and James, we may enumerate that of Dr.

Wotton being ſent into Scotland by Elizabeth as a ſpy upon the actions of James, and who afterwards entered into a conſpiracy to deliver him into her hands. This is pretty much the part which Roſencrantz and Guildenſtern play againſt Hamlet. Yet this ſimilarity appears too palpable for Shakſpeare to have introduced deſignedly, as it muſt have given offence to Elizabeth, and it is likewiſe too obvious to have been introduced without his obſerving it [1].

There is one circumſtance attending the publication of this play, and which belongs to this alone of all our Author's dramas publiſhed in his life time: viz. that it

1 The outlines of the character of Horatio may be found in the Chronicle and Hyſtorie of Hamblett, but it was perhaps finiſhed and coloured from the Duke of Lenox, James's favourite during his minority in Scotland. Of James's friendſhip for this nobleman Dr. Robertſon gives the following account:

"As he was the earlieſt, and beſt beloved, he was, perhaps, the moſt deſerving, though not the moſt able of all James's favourites. The warmth and tenderneſs of his maſter's affection for him was not abated by death itſelf. By many acts of kindneſs and generoſity towards his poſterity, the King not only did great honour to the memory of Lenox, but ſet his own character in one of its moſt favourable points of view."

Hiſt. of Scotland, Vol. 2. p. 99. 14th Edn.

If theſe inſtances prove nothing elſe, they at leaſt point out the remarkable coincidences of the Hiſtory and Tragedy, and the extreme aptneſs of the former for the conſtruction of the latter.

It may be obſerved likewiſe that the incident of Polonius being murdered in the preſence of the Queen in her cloſet, bears a reſemblance to the murder of Rizzio in Mary's apartment.

it was augmented to near as much again in the ſecond as in the firſt edition, which is ſuppoſed to have been publiſhed in 1602. Unfortunately there is no copy of that known to be extant. The ſecond, publiſhed in 1604, ſets forth in the title-page that it was "*newly* imprinted, and enlarged to almoſt as much again *as it was, according to the true and perfect copy.*" No doubt there was ſome particular reaſon, for either ſuppreſſing a part of the original at the firſt publication, or enlarging his deſign at the ſecond, whichever it was that cauſed this difference between the two editions; and, could the firſt edition be diſcovered, it would moſt probably throw ſome new light on this hypotheſis.

The laſt circumſtance to be noticed, trifling as it is, is the Queen in the play dying by poiſon, of which her huſband is the involuntary adminiſterer. He is the cauſe and puniſher of her guilt: another hit of the poet's.

Bothwell had poiſoned Mary's cup of happineſs, and it was her marriage with him which was the cauſe of her ſorrows and her death.

A remark may be here made upon a note of Mr. Malone's. which may perhaps be conſidered as favouring this hypotheſis. He ſuppoſes the Winter's Tale to have been planned before, but not written till after, the death of Elizabeth.

"Sir

"Sir William Blackſtone (ſays he) has pointed out a paſſage in the firſt act of this play, which had eſcaped my obſervation, and which, as he juſtly obſerves, furniſhes a proof that it was not written till after the death of Queen Elizabeth:

——————If I could find example
Of thouſands, that had ſtruck anointed Kings,
And flouriſh'd after, I'd not do it; but ſince
Nor braſs, nor ſtone, nor parchment, bears not one,
Let villainy itſelf forſwear it.

Theſe lines (he adds) could never have been intended for the ear of her who had deprived the Queen of Scots of her life. To the ſon of Mary they could not but have been agreeable."

To this it may be replied that perhaps the paſſage was levelled againſt Mary, who had attempted to recover her own rights by cutting off her perſecutor, and it applies as well, or better to her, having ſuffered by it, than to Elizabeth. Some paſſages in Hamlet of the ſame nature with this, and which were certainly written after Mary's death, and while Elizabeth was alive, may tend to ſtrengthen this opinion:

The ſingle and peculiar life is bound,
With all the ſtrength and armour of the mind,
To keep itſelf from 'noyance; but much more,
That ſpirit, upon whoſe weal depend and reſt
The lives of many. The ceaſe of majeſty
Dies not alone; but, like a gulph, doth draw

What's

What's near it, with it: it is a maſſy wheel,
Fix'd on the ſummit of the higheſt mount,
To whoſe huge ſpokes ten thouſand leſſer things
Are mortis'd and adjoin'd; which, when it falls,
Each ſmall annexment, petty conſequence,
Attends the boiſterous ruin. Never alone
Did the King ſigh, but with a general groan.

Act 3. S. 3.

There's ſuch divinity doth hedge a King,
That treaſon can but peep to what it would,
Acts little of his will.

Act 4. S. 5.

The Author has now gone through the arguments he purpoſed in favour of his hypotheſis; ſome of them are ſtrong, ſome ſlighter, and ſome perhaps merely the arguments of one wiſhing to eſtabliſh an hypotheſis; yet, taken together, they form ſuch a body of proof, that the readers, muſt, ſurely, by this time, be as fully convinced of the truth of it as the Author himſelf. They muſt at leaſt allow—if they will not aſſent to Shakſpeare's having an intention to cenſure Mary—that the coincidences of what the Poet added, as well as the incidents of the original ſtory, are uncommon.

Shakſpeare, it is well known, was a court poet. He took every opportunity of flattering Elizabeth. He complimented her, at the expence of her rival, in the Midſummer Night's dream:

He

He wrote his Richard the Third with all the prejudices, and agreeable to all the legends of the Lancaſtrians:

His Merry Wives of Windſor is ſaid to have been written expreſsly at her deſire:

His Henry the Eighth is profuſe in flattery,

And the Winter's Tale is written to exculpate her mother.

It is plain therefore that Shakſpeare would have been happy in any opportunity of flattering his Queen, by feeding her hatred againſt Mary. Yet afterwards, when James came to the throne, he paid his court to him:

He apologized for his unbending manner in Meaſure for Meaſure, and inſerted a compliment to him in Henry the Eighth, at the very time he was heaping praiſes upon the murderer of his mother. We cannot then ſuppoſe him to have been reſtrained from calumniating Mary either from motives of delicacy or conſiſtency.

Theſe obſervations, before they went to the preſs, were ſhewn to a gentleman, for whoſe abilities and critical acumen the author entertains the higheſt reſpect. He gave it as his opinion, "That Shakſpeare had

had no deſign of cenſuring Mary when he wrote this Tragedy. A ſtory and play, he obſerved, had already been taken from the ſame ſubject, and, being popular, naturally induced him to fix upon it for the plot of a Tragedy. From the ſimilarity of the ſtories, the circumſtances attached to the incidents of Mary's life, being ſo freſh in remembrance, naturally ſuggeſted themſelves, and he perhaps drew his characters from thoſe concerned in her ſtory, without any intention of affixing reproach to her name, Had he deſigned to criminate her, he would have made the Queen both a more prominent, and a more depraved character. That if any particular alluſion was deſigned, it muſt have been rather to exculpate than blame her. The natural benevolence of his diſpoſition would reſtrain him from cenſure, and the tenderneſs[2] with which he has

2 I am far from thinking that Shakſpeare has treated the Queen with tenderneſs. In the cloſet ſcene Hamlet treats her with uncommon ſeverity for a ſon, and nothing but the Queen's accumulated guilt can juſtify ſuch bitter reproaches. This ſcene may be conſidered as a repreſentation of the difference between Mary and her ſon.

Ham. Leave wringing of your hands: peace, ſit you down,
And let me *wring your heart:* for ſo I ſhall,
If it be made of penetrable ſtuff;
If damned cuſtom have not braz'd it ſo,
That it be proof and bulwark againſt ſenſe.

Queen. What have I done, that thou dar'ſt wag thy tongue
In noiſe ſo rude againſt me?

Ham. Such *an act,*
That blurs the grace and bluſh of modeſty:
Calls *virtue,* HYPOCRITE; takes off *the roſe*

From

has treated the character of the Queen, and by *not* repreſenting her as acceſſary to the murder of her huſ-

From the fair forehead of an *innocent love,*
And *ſets a bliſter there ;* makes *marriage vows*
As falſe as DICERS' OATHS. O, ſuch a deed,
As *from the body of* CONTRACTION *plucks*
THE VERY SOUL ; *and ſweet* RELIGION *makes*
A rhapſody of words : &c.

Queen. Ay me, what act,
That *roars ſo loud,* and *thunders* in the index ?

Act 3. S. 4.

This laſt ſpeech of the Queen looks as if ſhe *expected ſome* NEW *accuſation.* Her inceſtuous marriage was publicly known and reprobated, and ſhe could not be ſurprized at Hamlet's reproving her for that. But, from this *tremendous index,* ſhe expects ſome more aggravated guilt to be charged againſt her.

Hamlet proceeds to his accuſation.

Look here, upon this picture, and on this, &c.

And is only interrupted in this bitter reproof by the appearance of his Father's Ghoſt, who comes to remind him of his promiſed revenge on his murderer, and to bid him "ſtep between his mother and her fighting ſoul." Perhaps it is this interference alone which, amid this "whirlwind of his paſſion," prevents him charging his mother with his father's murder.

A further confirmation of Hamlet's firm perſuaſion of his mother's guilt—if proof be yet wanting—may be had from his ſoliloquy at the end of S. 2. Act 3.

Unleſs he was fully perſuaded of her being acceſſary to his father's murder, he need not fear leſt his "heart ſhould loſe its nature," and, "the ſoul of *Nero* enter his firm boſom :" her inceſtuous marriage he had tamely ſubmitted to, and, if it deſerved his puniſhing, it ſhould have been done long before. But now, having diſcovered a more flagrant crime than the former, and being in ſuch a diſpoſition of mind that he

huſband, appears rather like an apology than a cenſure."

In reply to this it may be ſaid that of all Shakſpeare's indirect alluſions, whether complimentary or ſevere, this is the moſt pointed. Hermione is a far leſs prominent character than Gertrude, and leſs pains are taken to prove her innocence than to expoſe the criminality of our Queen. With regard to the Queen's being acceſſary to the murder, as there are different opinions reſpecting it, thoſe who ſuppoſe her guilty will ſide with this hypotheſis, thoſe who believe her innocent will incline to the more favourable ſide.

The circumſtance attending the great difference in the firſt and ſecond editions of this play, may be accounted for, perhaps, in ſome meaſure between theſe two opinions. Shakſpeare might deſign it originally as an undiſguiſed crimination and publiſh it as ſuch in 1602, but, when James came to the crown in 1603, the fear of his diſpleaſure would induce him to alter it, and the preſent character from the edition of 1604, if

could drink hot blood,
And do ſuch buſineſs as the bitter day
Would quake to look on,

It requires all his fortitude to refrain from executing the juſt puniſhment ſhe merits, and which his *nature* and the interdiction of his father conſpire to prevent. He determines therefore only to *ſpeak* DAGGERS to her, not to uſe any;

My tongue and ſoul in this be hypocrites:
How in my words ſoever ſhe be ſhent,
To give them ſeals never, my ſoul, conſent.

if repreſented as innocent of the murder of her huſband, may be ſoftened down from an original, where the Queen was to "ſee the inmoſt part of her." And the reaſon that no copy of the firſt edition is now extant, may be from a ſtudious care taken to ſuppreſs a work which would give ſo much offence.

The following paſſage may be a part of what was added as a compliment to James:

> The courtier's *ſoldier's*, ſcholar's, eye, tongue, ſword;
> The *expectancy* and roſe of the fair ſtate,
> The glaſs of faſhion and the mould of form,
> The obſerv'd of all obſervers.
>
> Act 3. S. 1.

It does not appear that Hamlet was a ſoldier, he was a ſtudent only at Wittenberg: James was a Soldier.

This "glaſs of faſhion and mould of form" is likewiſe repreſented in Act 5. S. 2. as "fat and ſcant of breath." Vide Mr. Steevens' note upon this paſſage, Malone, Vol. 9. p. 419.

Upon the whole, however opinions may vary reſpecting ſome circumſtances, the Author flatters himſelf that no one will doubt, but that Mary (whether Shakſpeare thought her guilty or innocent) was the original of his Queen.

He makes no doubt but much more might be brought in favour of the hypotheſis, were he to ſearch

after arguments; but he is little read in the books of that period, and thinks sufficient time and pains have been already bestowed upon the subject.

Let not the reader of these pages think that the Author wishes to detract from the blazonry of fame, which must ever be inseparable from the name of Shakspeare. As a man he was subject to human failings, as a poet his imperfections, like foils, but set off the brilliancy of his beauties:

His eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Could glance from Heaven to earth, from earth to Heaven;
And, as imagination bodied forth
The forms of things unknown, his magic pen
Turn'd them to shapes, and gave to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.

FINIS.